

which includes 205 species and covers 40 pages. One typographical abnormality of the Illustrated Flora has disappeared, namely, the use of *AEsculus* for *Aesculus*. The use of the capital E was both ugly and incorrect and has been dispensed with in the Manual.

The Engler and Prantl sequence, and the many new species and new names will give to some a feeling of strangeness. He who was brought up to look for the Ranunculaceae on page 1 of his botany and now at last locates them near the middle of the book, not very far from the vile Chenopodiaceae; who must learn to discriminate ten species of *Antennaria* where the early botanists taught him there was only one; and who used to think that *Acer saccharinum* meant the sugar maple, when now it means the silver maple—he who has a feeling that unnecessary duties are thrust upon him by these new features must remember that they appear because they are right, and that the old features have been discarded because they were wrong.

Every botanist from Labrador to the Cimarron must have a copy of "Britton's Manual." He will find it a comfortable book to hold in his hand and a satisfactory book with which to name any plant from adder's tongue to blessed thistle.—FREDERICK V. COVILLE.

#### A popular Work on Ferns\*

Mr. Clute has given us a carefully prepared and readable book on the ferns of the Northeastern States, for the subtitle, which reads "A Guide to all the native Species" has a local rather than a national significance and for that reason is misleading. The work includes a combination of ancient folk-lore about ferns, poetical allusions to ferns, mingled with an untechnical statement of their characters, habits, and haunts, not badly written, and provided with a series of accurate structural illustrations. To these are added a considerable number of full-page illustrations, some of them colored. From the artistic standpoint these full-page illustrations may be correct but as a means of illustrating the habits and especially the habitats of our ferns they are far from success-

\* CLUTE, W. N. Our Ferns in their Haunts, a Guide to all the native Species. 12mo., pp. xii, 322. Illustrated. New York. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

ful. River scenes and other miscellaneous rural landscapes with a fern of some sort placed in one corner apparently as an after-thought or adaptation of the artist do not bring out the true relations of the ferns to their surroundings as might easily have been accomplished with a camera.

It is of course natural to bring this book into contrast with others of its class and particularly with Mrs. Parsons' *How to Know the Ferns*. It contains more folk-lore, gives evidence of more research into the old literature of ferns, presents more proof of an accurate familiarity with ferns in the field, contains less personal narrative, and its structural illustrations are a decided improvement. As a piece of book-making and artistic illustration it is also superior when that feature is considered from an artistic instead of a scientific standpoint. But as a means of knowing our ferns which is professedly one of its reasons for being, it lacks some features of arrangement that have rendered Mrs. Parsons' effort very successful.

For an untechnical book, the matter of nomenclature figures too prominently and the author may well feel the uncertainty he cannot conceal that the nomenclature he uses is either correct or final. To the majority of the class of people to whom the book will appeal it matters little what names they find so long as they have a Latin sound, for those who study ferns for more than a passing amusement will find in standard manuals the prevailing and proper nomenclature. It shows poor taste for a professed "conservative" to propose such a combination as "*Mattuccia Struthiopteris Pennsylvanica*" in advance of a proven necessity and contrary to his profession of belief. It betokens weakness of position and insincere principles, and besides could not be used since the earliest name of the American form if distinct from the European is not *Pennsylvanica*. From a botanical standpoint changes in nomenclature in a work professedly untechnical are inexcusable anyway.—L. M. UNDERWOOD.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, 6 Nov. 1901.